6-21-2019

Marketing Of Library And Information Services In A Digital Age: Application Of The Marketing Mix: A Case Study Of Two Private Universities In Ogun and Osun State

CHIDI DEBORAH SEGUN-ADENIRAN
Covenant University, chidi.segun-adeniran@covenantuniversity.edu.ng

OLAJUMOKE OLAWOYIN
Covenant University, olajumoke.olawoyin@covenantuniversity.edu.ng

ESTHER LAWAL-SOLARIN
Covenant University, esther.lawal-solarin@covenantuniversity.edu.ng

Marketing Of Library And Information Services In A Digital Age: Application Of The Marketing Mix: A Case Study Of Two Private Universities In Ogun And Osun State

by

SEGUN-ADENIRAN, Chidi Deborah

Centre for Learning Resources, Covenant University

chidi.segun-adeniran@covenantuniversity.edu.ng

OLAWOYIN,Olajumoke

Centre for Learning Resources, Covenant University

olajumoke.olawoyin@covenantuniversity.edu.ng

and

LAWAL-SOLARIN, Esther

Centre for Learning Resources, Covenant University

esther.lawal-solarin@covenantuniversity.edu.ng

Introduction

Marketing is a commercial process that involves promoting, selling and distribution of products and service. It is an integral part of the activities carried out by institutions, companies and individuals and thus cannot be ignored especially when it relates to libraries and information centres; this is because the main objective of any library is to promote and satisfy the information needs of its clienteles. In this present 21st century, there has been a massive level of improvements in services carried out by the libraries; these services have transcended beyond the usual manual methods to automated methods hence, it is paramount that the various categories of library users are intimated with these advancements in services offered by the library.

Pantange (2013) explained that the activity of marketing involves improving the image of the institution in question, attracting and maintaining an increasing population of satisfied customers or users as in the case of libraries and information centres. The process of marketing serves as the intermediary or link between the initiating organisation and the prospective customers; it involves the combination of activities that links the institution or organisation to individuals that may use, sell or buy the products and the benefits and the services it provides" (Joseph & Parameswari, 2002, p.1).

It would not be right to assume that they readily know the diverse services available for library clienteles; hence, it is paramount that marketing is given uttermost priority in libraries and information centres. This is because apt marketing of these unique services and resources ensure maximal utilization of available resources and services. In the same vein, when marketing is taken with levity, there would be an obvious decline in the use of library services and resources by prospective patrons.

Objectives of the Study

This main objective of this study is to investigate the act of marketing and promotion of library services in libraries in private universities.

The specific objectives are to:

    i.   find out the extent to which is marketing of library and information services practiced in the libraries in private universities;

    ii.   ascertain the marketing strategies used in the libraries in private universities;

    iii.   determine the benefits derived from the practice of marketing of library and information services and

iv.   identify the challenges involved in the process of marketing of library and information services in libraries in private universities.

Research Questions

1. To what extent is the marketing of library and information services carried out in the libraries in private universities?

2. What marketing strategies are used in the libraries in private universities?

3. What are the benefits derived from the practice of marketing of library and information services?

4. What are the challenges involved in the process of marketing of library and information services in libraries in private universities?

Literature Review

Various definitions of marketing have been given in literature; however a few will be explained in this section. Marketing can be defined as "a form of constructive engagement, a societal function and a systemic set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and for managing customer and societal relationships in ways that benefits local and global stakeholders of these processes" (Shapiro,Tadajewski & Shultz, 2009,p.92). From this definition, it is obvious that the central point of any marketing process is to ensure that benefits are gotten from both parties and in this case, the parties are the library (information provider) and the prospective library clientele.

Another concise definition of marketing was given as "the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners and society at large" (American Marketing Association 2017,pp.1).

It is however pertinent to note that there are some elements at the centre of the marketing activity usually referred to as the marketing mix. The elements that make up the marketing mix can be viewed as instruments that enhance the whole marketing process. Marketing can also be defined as "the set of marketing tools the firm uses to pursue its marketing objectives or goals in the target market" (Kotler, 2003, p.15). The elements of the marketing mix are product, price, place and promotion. These elements are needed in the process of planning strategies for carrying out marketing of library and information services. Libraries are the main custodians of information in various formats and this information is very important especially in this digital/information age. Hence, it is sometimes referred to as an economic resource. It is therefore paramount that information products and services are marketed by librarians and library personnels in libraries and information centres.

Marketing of library and information services is a relatively new area of study hence some librarians are of the opinion that such activity is impossible but some authorities in marketing, specifically Philip Kotler asserts the act of marketing is not limited to profit making organizations but it could also be applicable to non-profited oriented organizations like libraries and information centres (Pantage, 2013). The famous Indian librarian, Ranganathan initiated the process of marketing of library and information services through the five laws of librarianship he propounded. These laws serve as the core of library and information service as it is centred on quality client satisfaction. The laws are:

- Books are for use
- Every user its book
- Every book its user
- Do not waste the time of the library user
- The library is a growing organism

Establishment of libraries, especially libraries in higher institution of learning is to serve as the centre of activities especially for the purpose of teaching, learning and research. The goal of establishment of any library centres on these functions. Some of the specific functions and services offered by the library targeted towards the achieving the aim of any academic institution includes the following functions: cataloguing and classification, circulation (charging and discharging of library resources), reference services, selective dissemination of information, user orientation, current awareness services, serial services, virtual library services, etc.

It is of utmost importance that the library clienteles are brought to the fore as regards these diverse services offered by the libraries, hence libraries make use of various marketing strategies in line with the 4Ps of marketing- Price, promotion, product (service) and place to ensure the maximal utilization of the resources made available in the library (Zubair, Mamat & Mohammad, 2017). Similarly, "marketing of services offered by the library involves having a firm grip of the objectives of the library and the needs of the prospective clients and tailoring the services provided to perfectly suit the clienteles needs" (Ifijeh et al., 2016, p.105). In this 21st century, usually referred to as the digital age, the services offered by the library have increased to accommodate some automated services being offered by the library to its clientele and it is pertinent that users are intimated with these services offered. Pantil & Prandan (2014, p.250) highlighted some purposes of marketing of library and information services as follows:

- To heighten to use of print and electronic resources available in the library and create awareness among users
- To maximize the use of information within limited resources and manpower
- To better the image of the library and/or information centre
- To provide users with precise and accurate information for their research and learning in this age of information explosion

Strategies for Marketing of Library and Information Services: The Marketing Mix

Every organisation, company, institution has products that they intend to bring to the reach of their prospective clients; this also applies to libraries and information centres. Libraries have products in form of print resources, electronic resources and even human resources that they need to bring to the awareness of users through viable strategies (Zubair, Mamat & Noor, 2017). The 21st century era has brought about addiction by some library clientele to information and communication technologies, hence it also serves as a good platform for librarians to market their services through some of these ICT tools (Ifijeh et al., 2016), although the addiction of these young library clientele to information technologies may be viewed as a challenge if not properly maximized. Application of the four marketing mix could serve as a good strategy for marketing library and information services in this digital age. The marketing mix element price simply explains in this context that the amount allocated to the library in the institution's budgetary provision should be large enough to accommodate the acquisition of necessary facilities and resources that will enhance service provision. The library is not a profit-making organisation and does not charge clients but when there is need for fee-based services, it should be done with utmost discretion. Some of these fee- based services include charges for Selective Dissemination of Information, registration of library users, reprographic services, binding services, etc. (Ifijeh et al., 2016). The increase in the amount allocated to libraries and information centres from the host institution's budget would enhance the acquisition of standard facilities and infrastructure that would encourage the use of the library by prospective clientele.

It is also necessary that the library makes available a list of a products and services offered to their clientele. This ensures that no one is left uninformed about the services carried out in the library, especially uncommon services such as selective dissemination of information, information technology skill straining, repackaging of information, etc. This awareness are created through constant publicity on the university's website, regular library orientation and awareness other programmes, etc.

It is of utmost importance that the element- promotion are put into consideration when marketing library services and products. Promotion involves activities such as establishing proper feedback channels between the library/ librarians and the clienteles, readily accessible communication channels like emails and instant messenger where users could channel their information query. Regular surveys are to be carried out often to ensure that library clientele are getting the high level of satisfaction and this could be done through one-on-one interaction or the use of evaluation forms and questionnaires. This activity helps the library staff to know where they need to put in more efforts.

In addition, the place that is the physical location of the library should not be ignored. Aesthetics should be given high priority, as this would encourage young users to visit the library and further explore the resources available therein. The library can also make its services mobile with liaison librarians (meeting the needs of staffs and students of institution). These set of librarians would reach out to the library users, for example in a university setting, the liaison librarians can interact closely with various lecturers in various disciplines(departments); find out their research areas, collect their reading lists for the session and ensure that the need resources on these list are made available in the library.

The library can further reach out to clientele by making the library a place with walls, which is, making the resources available in electronic or digital format. This would encourage and increase access to the resources without being physically present in the library. This act would encourage users who prefer to read information resources available in on their information technology gadgets like tablets, laptops, computers, etc, rather that come physically to the library.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The study adopted the research descriptive design and fifty-five (55) library staff made up the entire population of respondent; forty-three from Covenant University library and twelve from Redeemer's University library. Due to the size of the population, the total enumeration technique was used for sampling. A self-designed questionnaire was administered and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, results were reported in simple frequency tables and charts.

Demographic Information

Majority of the respondents were females (63.6%) while only (36.40.0%) were male. The highest number (30.9%) of librarians were from Reader's Services units, followed by the

Circulation (25.5%) unit, Technical unit (21.8%), Indexing and Reference units (5.5%) respectively, Reference (5.5%) unit, Reserved and Serials (3.6%) as well as Repository and Acquisition (1.8%) respectively.

The result revealed that over 34.5% of the respondents were Library Officer, followed by Librarian I (25.5%), Assistant Librarian II (20.0%), Librarian II (9.1%), while only (3.6%) were Library Assistant, Senior Librarian and Principal Librarian respectively.
For the years of experience, majority (32.7%) of librarians had years of experience between 6 and 10 years while only 3.6% had 20years and above in terms of their years of experience.

Evidence from Table 1 indicated that majority (40.0%) of the respondents had OND, followed by 20.0% other qualifications such as MLS, MARIM, while 1.8% had Ph.D (Table 1).

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents.

		Frequency	%
Name of Library	Covenant University	43	78.2
	Redeemer University	12	21.8
	TOTAL	**55**	**100.0**
Sex	Male	20	36.4
	Female	35	63.6
	TOTAL	**55**	**100.0**
Unit in the Library	Acquisition	1	1.8
	Circulation	14	25.5
	Indexing	3	5.5
	Reader's Services	17	30.9
	Reference	3	5.5
	Repository	1	1.8
	Reserved	2	3.6
	Serials	2	3.6
	Technical unit	12	21.8
	TOTAL	**55**	**100.0**
Status/Designation	Library Assistant	2	3.6
	Library Officer	19	34.5
	Assistant Librarian	11	20.0
	Librarian II	5	9.1
	Librarian I	14	25.5
	Senior Librarian	2	3.6
	Principal Librarian	2	3.6
	TOTAL	**55**	**100.0**
Years of Experience	0-5	17	30.9
	6- 10	18	32.7

	11-15	14	25.5
	16-20	4	7.3
	20 and above	2	3.6
	TOTAL	**55**	**100.0**
Highest Qualification	SSCE	6	10.9
	OND	22	40.0
	HND	4	7.3
	1st Degree	11	20.0
	Ph.D	1	1.8
	Other	11	20.0
	TOTAL	**55**	**100.0**

Research Findings:

The following analysis proffer answers the research questions contained in this study:

Research Questions 1:

Find out the extent to which marketing of library and information services is practiced in the libraries   in   private   universities.
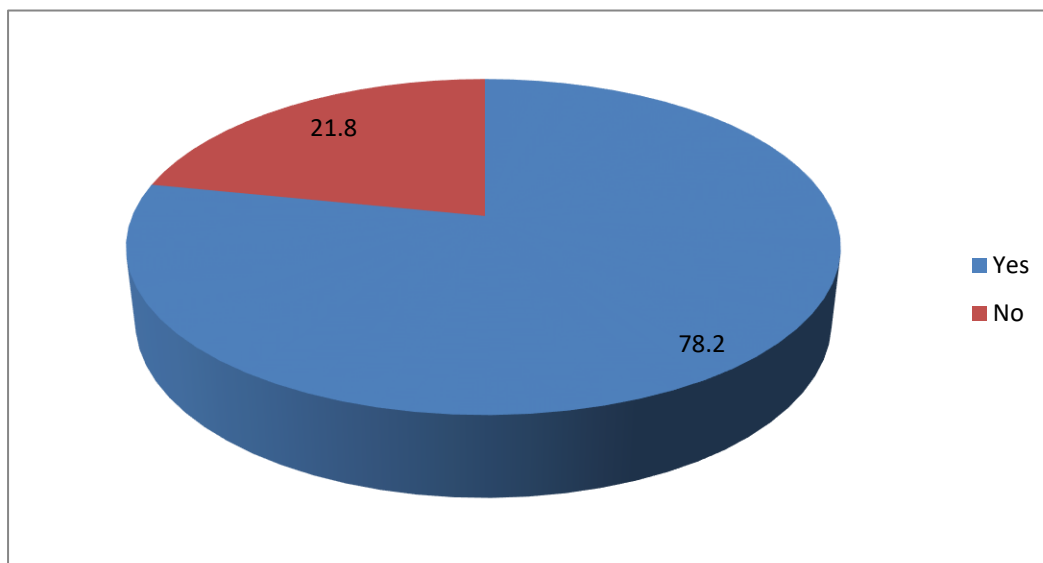

Figure 1: Marketing of library and information services practiced in the libraries.

Responding to a question to establish if librarians and other library personnel carried out marketing of library services in selected two libraries in Ogun State, figure 1 revealed that (78.2%) indicated that they engaged in marketing of library services.
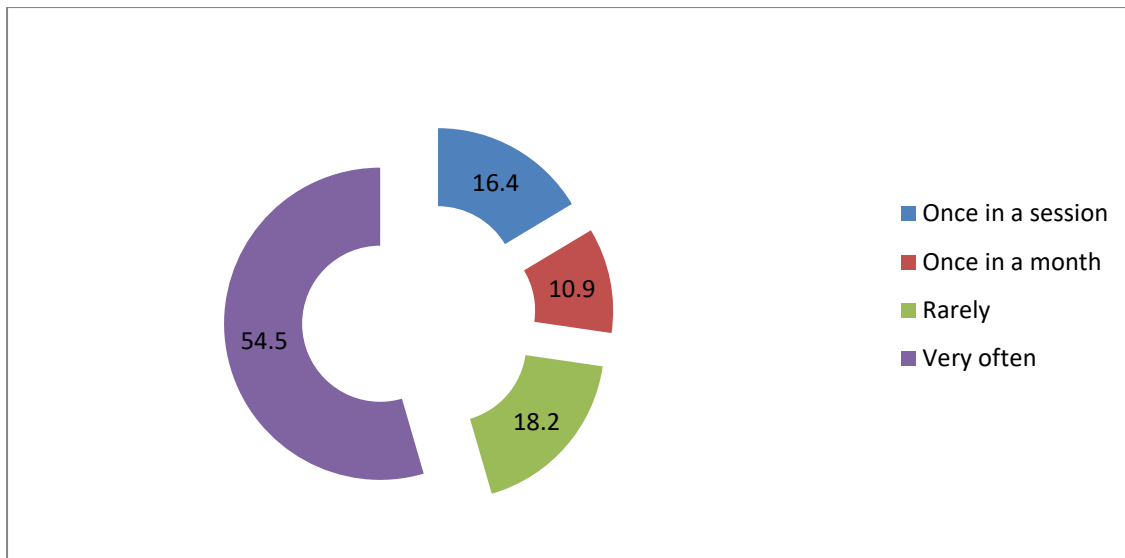
Figure 2: Frequency of library and information services marketing

Figure 2 revealed that (54.5%) of the respondents indicated that they carried out activities marketing of library and information services very often. This reveals that there is a high level of practice of marketing of library and information services in these libraries, hence it is expected that the rate of patronage would be relatively high and also it would have a positive effect on the level of publication outputs of academics in these private universities.

Research Questions 2: Strategies or methods used to promote and market library services
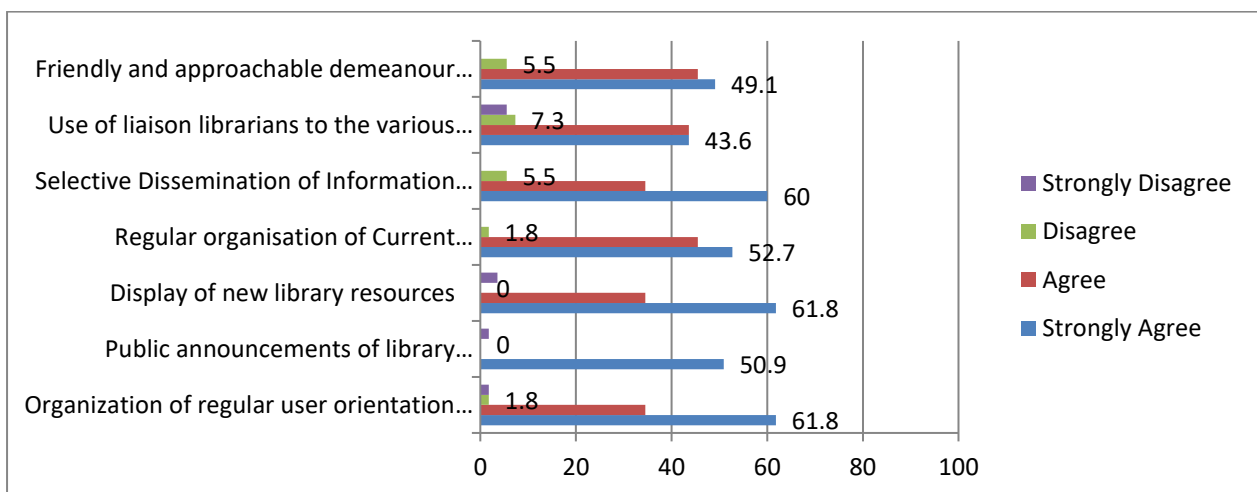

Figure 3: Strategies Used to Promote and Market Library Services.

The findings in figure 3 revealed that 61.8% practice display of new library resources, 60% practice Selective Dissemination of Information to lecturers according to their research and 50.9% make use of public announcements of library services in university meetings. These were the major strategies used to promote and market library services in selected university libraries in Ogun State. The strategy of using display of newly acquired library resources was

rated high closely followed by Selective Dissemination of Information goes in line with the conclusion of Odine (2011). She unequivocally opined that exhibitions and display of new library material sis a very efficient and cost effective technique in marketing library services. Selective Dissemination of Information is one of the major strategies utilized for marketing library services in these libraries under study and this can be accrued to the fact that library clients would be very encouraged to patronise the library and make maximum use of the resources contained therein when these resources are target at meeting their specific information needs. However, the strategy of using liaison librarians seems to have relatively low score and this could be because of the demanding nature of such a strategy especially taking into consideration the huge workload of these librarians.

Table 2: Strategies Used to Promote and Market Library Services.

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Organization of regular user orientation programmes	34	61.8	19	34.5	1	1.8	1	1.8	55	100.0
Public announcements of library services in university meetings	28	50.9	22	40.0	4	7.3	1	1.8	55	100.0
Display of new library resources	34	61.8	19	34.5	0	0.0	2	3.6	55	100.0
Regular organisation of current awareness services	29	52.7	25	45.5	1	1.8	0	0.0	55	100.0
Selective Dissemination of Information to lecturers according to their research areas	33	60.0	19	34.5	3	5.5	0	0.0	55	100.0
Use of liaison librarians to the various departments and colleges	24	43.6	24	43.6	4	7.3	3	5.5	55	100.0
Friendly and approachable demeanor of librarians and library staff	27	49.1	25	45.5	3	5.5	0	0.0	55	100.0
Advertising library services and resources on the university web page	28	50.9	25	45.5	1	1.8	1	1.8	55	100.0
Personal interaction with prospective library users	24	43.6	28	50.9	0	0.0	3	5.5	55	100.0

Table 2 reveals the various strategies employed by libraries as regards the marketing of their services and from the table, it is evident that the most employed strategy is the organisation of

regular orientation programme and display of new library resources to which about 61.8% respondents strongly agreed to the use of these strategies. This was closely followed by the employment of the strategy of Selective Dissemination of Information to the various library clientele was revealed that 60% of the respondents strongly agreed to the use of this strategy.

Research Question 3:

Benefits derived from marketing of library services

Table 3: The Benefits Derived from Marketing of Library Services

Benefits of Marketing Library Services	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Increase in library patronage	26	47.3	29	52.7	0	0.00	0	0.00	55	100.0
Better use of library funds	26	47.3	28	50.9	1	1.8	0	0.00	55	100.0
Increase in the level of research and academic activities	26	47.3	27	49.1	1	1.8	1	1.8	55	100.0
Better understanding of the unique needs of clientele	27	49.1	26	47.3	1	1.8	1	1.8	55	100.0
Attainment of the objectives of the library	26	47.3	26	47.3	2	3.6	1	1.8	55	100.0
Attain satisfaction of clienteles' need	27	49.1	26	47.3	2	3.6			55	100.0
Better awareness of the unique services offered by the library	26	47.3	26	47.3	1	1.8	2	3.6	55	100.0

For the benefits of marketing library services; Strongly Agree and Agree, as well as Disagree and Strongly Disagree were grouped together, for a significant interpretation of the results. According to the research findings shown in figure 3, the highest numbers of the respondents (100%, that is summing the values for strongly agreed-47.3% and agreed-52.7%) strongly agreed and agreed that increase in library patronage is one of the benefits derived from marketing of library services, and 98.2% (summing the values for strongly agreed-47.3% and agreed-50.9%) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that better use of library funds while 96.4% indicated better awareness of the unique services offered by the library, attain satisfaction of clienteles' need, attainment of the objectives of the library, better understanding of the unique needs of clientele and increase in the level of research and academic activities respectively.

Numerous benefits are usually attained when proper and regular marketing of library services is carried out. However, from the figure above, it is obvious that the most common advantage

is a drastic increase in the level of library patronage. This is the main goal of any library; that is, a library would just be a mere building full of books and other information resources that are not being maximally utilized if proper marketing is not carried out. The increase in the level of patronage of the library resources would also lead to increase in the quantity and quality of research output of academics in these universities.

Research Question 4:

What are the challenges involved in the process of marketing of library and information services?

Table 4: Challenges Involved in the Process of Marketing of Library and Information Services

Challenges involved in the process of marketing library and information services	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Inadequate funding	11	20.0	21	38.2	19	34.5	4	7.3	55	100.0
Lack of needed cooperation from the prospective library users	4	7.3	18	32.7	26	47.3	7	12.7	55	100.0
Lackadaisical attitude of library personnel towards marketing	5	9.1	18	32.7	24	43.6	8	14.5	55	100.0
Lack of requisite skill needed for marketing	4	7.3	19	34.5	21	38.2	11	20.0	55	100.0
Low self-esteem of library staff	7	12.7	11	20.0	29	52.7	8	14.5	55	100.0
Time constraint	5	9.1	23	41.8	20	36.4	7	12.7	55	100.0
Unavailability of needed facilities and infrastructure for marketing	4	7.3	10	18.2	19	34.5	22	40.0	55	100.0

For the challenges involved in the process of marketing of library and information services, for meaningful interpretation of the results, Strongly Agree and Agree, as well as Disagree and Strongly Disagree were grouped together. Results from table 4 revealed that 58.2% (summing the values for strongly agreed-20% and agreed-38.2%) indicated that inadequate funding is challenge faced while carrying out marketing of library and information services and 50.9% (summing the values for strongly agreed-9.1% and agreed-41.8%) of the respondents indicated that time constraint was the major challenge confronting librarians in the process of marketing of library and information services.

This conclusion goes in line the submissions of Ifijeh et al. (2016) who asserted that academic libraries in Nigeria are faced with the obvious challenge of limited funds and dwindling finances. In other to carry out effective marketing of library and information services

offered in any library, needed funds must be made available; however a good number of university libraries today are posed with the challenge of funding. Most of the times, the libraries are usually being neglected and this affects the smooth running of the activities in the library.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The importance of marketing of library and information services cannot be overemphasized especially in academic institutions where the main objectives of such institutions are teaching, research and learning. It is the ultimate responsibility of libraries in academic institutions to promote this goal of teaching, learning and research through the provision of necessary information and human resources. These resources when made available by the library can only be harnessed maximally where there is a reasonable level of awareness among the prospective users hence marketing of library and information service is paramount. University management team should also assist in making this exercise possible through the release of necessary funds, as this is pivotal to the success of any marketing activity as insufficient fund was seen to be a major challenge faced during the process of marketing. It is also pertinent that librarians and other information professional pay more attention to the liaison librarian services, as this is usually very effective as the information needs of various users are specifically attended to thereby increasing library patronage.

REFERENCES

American Marketing Association (2017). Definition of marketing. Retrieved from: https://www.ama.org/AboutAMA/Pages/Definition-of-Marketing.aspx on 11/04/18

Ifijeh, G., Adebayo, O., Asaolu, A. & Michael-Onuoha, H. (2016). Nigerian university libraries and the question of marketing: reconciling the salient issues. *Information Impact,* 7(1), 102-114.

Joseph, J. and Parameswari, B. (2002). Marketing of information products and services for libraries in India. *Library Philosophy and Practice,* 5 (1). Retrieved from http://webpages.uidaho.edu/~mbolin/jestin2.PDF on 28/10/2017

Kotler, P. (2003). *Marketing management*. (11th ed.) Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. p. 15

Odine, R.O. (2011). Marketing library and information services in academic libraries in Niger state. Nsukka: Department of Library and Information Science

Pantage, J.T. (2013). Marketing of library and information products and services. *Global Journal of Human Social Science Linguistics & Education*, 13(1), 1-6

Patil, S.K. and Pradhan, P. (2014). Library promotion practices and marketing of library services: a role of library professionals. *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences,* 133, 9- 254 Retrieved from https://ac.els-cdn.com/S1877042814031012/1-s2.0-S1877042814031012-main.pdf?_tid=55fc3218-ae1b-49d6-a4d0-dba2cec6c0dc&acdnat=1523449494_2dce3de80722d04959f12db17abd89f9 on 14/02/2018

Shapiro, S.J., Tadajewski, M. & Shultz II, J. (Eds) (2009). *Macro marketing- A Global focus: marketing systems, societal development, equity & poverty*. Vol 1.Los Angeles: SAGE. p 92

Zubair, M.S., Mamat, W.A. and Mohammad, N.H. (2017). Qualitative inquiry on marketing strategies for promotion of library services in university libraries in Nigeria. Malaysia: Department of Library and Information Science